

Heber Valley races as it braces for 2002

Work ongoing
at what will be
busiest site of
2002 Olympics

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By AMY K. STEWART
The Daily Herald

HEBER VALLEY — On the east side of the Wasatch Mountain Range lies a sleepy little cluster of towns that are slowly beginning to stretch, yawn and peek a lazy eye at the sun that is sneaking up over the horizon.

Before they know it, the blazing orb will be high in the sky, it will be high noon and they will be playing a substantial role in hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics through the Soldier Hollow venue.

Great expectations

Soldier Hollow will be the busiest venue during the



Valley's locals
offer up views
on Olympics,
looming scandal

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HEBER VALLEY — Residents of the valley have plenty of opinions on the 2002 Olympics, and they have plenty of time to talk to you about them.

An old cafe called The Wagon Wheel rests in the middle of Heber City.

Locals sit at the bar, downing pie and coffee, and jaw about everything from the weather to the hay crop to, of course, the Olympic venue Soldier Hollow, which is being constructed just a few miles southwest of Heber.

"I don't like this progress," said Bill Cleft, 80, who was

Recent said he is still concerned about what will happen to the old jail. Neighbors still recall several incidents in the

we want with the building."

Following procedure

He said the county must have

65,847 square feet of floor space. Most of the building is already in office space.

The county hopes to con-

a Community Development Block Grant for another \$300,000, but at present they need \$1.8 million more.

home," Wright said. "But what the status of those weapons were, how they were used, or if they were used, I am not sure of at this time."

Police blocked off the street of the house and about a block in each direction from the house. About 15-20 police vehicles were at the scene.

The Utah County Sheriff's Department was contacted and their Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) responded at about 9:50 p.m. Also a County Sheriff's negotiator arrived and spoke with White over the phone at various times during the incident, Wright said.

Police from Salem also responded, along with a Payson ambulance crew, just as a pre-

nity leaders and said Wasatch Mountain State Park would be the ideal place.

Community leaders spent two months having public forums and gathering residents' input.

"We came away with the feeling in behalf of the community that this would be a good thing," Pearson said. "So we threw our hat in the ring."

Heber Valley competed with Squaw Peak in Provo, as well as sites in Logan and Ogden.

For a while it seemed Provo would win, but the area in Wasatch Mountain State Park had a lot of natural features, including a sheltered slope. And there was the advantage that the site was already owned by the State of Utah.

VALLEY

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Olympics don't bother me as long as they go home after it's through.

"You know they won't," Cleft said.

"I know," Mair said.

When asked about the recent SLOC resignations, Mair said it doesn't bother him.

"They start this scandal baloney and they can go anywhere in the world and get all

that type of stuff. All they've got to do is pressure somebody," he said. "But it don't bother me."

The waitresses at the Wagon Wheel not only hear the locals hash things over day after day, they usually take part in the conversation as well.

Norma Lux, 58, said she has mixed feelings about the nearby Olympic venue.

"I think it's great for the economy but I think it's bad for everybody else," Lux said. "I think it will bring a lot of people to the valley that we don't

need."

Lux added she thinks the recent alleged SLOC corruption is terrible.

"I can't believe they did it. I don't believe they bribed them. Utah won because we're the best," she said.

Farther west and closer to the venue, Midway residents have their own concerns. Peggy Barnes, 38, whose house is only a couple of miles east of Soldier Hollow, said she is worried about the plans to widen the road in front of her

house to make way for the Olympics.

"If they widen that it takes off 10 feet of my property," Barnes said.

But other than that, the Olympics will be a great opportunity, she said.

"It will be good for my children and ourselves to see and experience that," Barnes said.

One Midway resident is looking forward to the big event. Everice Schear, 80, said, "I like all the sports and it's just great having it come here."

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See HEBER, A2

As far as the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) resignations Friday, Cleft said he hopes it causes the whole thing to be canceled. Cleft's friend, Clinton Mair, 56, of Heber, said, "The Bean Cup on Feb. 20 and 21. Jan. 15 and 16; and Biathlon LL and Winter Utah Games on this winter include the NCAA. Two more events coming up can do but pray for snow. yet so there isn't much officials less of what's out there with one exception: they need snow. The lack of snow this year has caused the first Soldier Hollow event of 1999 to be canceled. The Utah Winter Games Biathlon was set for this week-end but didn't happen. Snow machines haven't been set up

KEVIN LEE/The Daily Herald

When the 2002

Road paved with snow: Jim and Lee Haupt enjoy the snow at Wasatch Mountain Park in this Feb. 28, 1998, file photo. The best venue of the Games will be at the site.

Pearson, Wasatch County Olympic Coordinator. He is also the county development director. "We're beginning construction but right now it's a lot of sagebrush," he said. Some pre-Olympic events can be held at the site regard-

Robyn said "There's not a heck of a lot out there yet," said Robyn

The competitions will take place over 16 days and will require 11 different race formats and course configurations. The venue is in Wasatch Mountain State Park near Heber City, which is about 43 miles from the Olympic Village. Work has started on Soldier

"Every time you turn around parents and grandparents. said, "I don't like all these people moving in." As far as the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) resignations Friday, Cleft said he hopes it causes the whole thing to be canceled. Cleft's friend, Clinton Mair, 56, of Heber, said, "The